

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of George Morris¹ W27804 Mary Morris f84VA
Transcribed by Will Graves 7/16/13

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading fails to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8th of June 1786." Please call errors or omissions to my attention.]

[p 14]

Orange County State of Virginia: to wit

On this the 22nd day of December 1834 personally appeared before the County Court of Orange, George Morris a resident of the County of Orange and State of Virginia, aged sixty-two years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress passed June the 7th 1832, that he enlisted in the County of Louisa where his father then lived in the year 17__ (a little before he was sixteen years of age) as a volunteer in a company commanded by Captain James Watson for the purpose of guarding the British and Hessian prisoners, called Burgoyne's men, who were stationed at the Barracks in the County of Albemarle in the State of Virginia. In this service he continued for several months the number he cannot positively state but to the best of his recollection and belief it was two or three months, while he was in that service, the guard was commanded by Major Burnley [Garland Burnley] and Colonel Taylor [Francis Taylor], soon after his return from the tour of duty, orders were received for eighteen months, militia men to be drafted to serve in the Southern Army, and the men had their choice either to enlist in what was called the State Garrison Regiment to serve in the State of Virginia, or to stand the draft to go to the South. He enlisted under Captain James Cannaday [probably Captain James Kennedy], this was in the year 1780. He joined the Regiment at Richmond (then commanded by Major Magill [probably Charles Magill or McGill] at the time of Lesley's [Alexander Leslie's] invasion, they were then marched to Cabin Point where they joined General Mhulenburg [Peter Muhlenberg] and thence to the neighborhood of Portsmouth, when the enemy left Portsmouth they were sent up to Petersburg, where he was taken sick, and laid for a long time very ill, when he got well enough to travel, he obtained a furlough, and returned to his father's in the County of Louisa, this was in the winter, how long he remained at his father's he does not now remember but when he returned to the Regiment, he found it at the Morven Hills [Malvern Hills], and then commanded by Colonel Dabney [probably Charles Dabney] and Major Campbell, Sometime after this, they were sent over the James River to the neighborhood of Petersburg, the British were in Petersburg, and while cannonading the enemy they are, the Marquis De Lafayette took the command, at least, this was the first time that he saw him, the American Army had to retreat, Cornwallis having joined the enemy in Petersburg, he was left with the rear guard below Richmond where they had a skirmish with the enemy, he was also with General Wayne [Anthony Wayne] in the engagement with the British at a place near James town, called the Green Spring [July 6, 1781] soon after this, I part of the Army to which his Regiment

¹ BLWt53757-160-55

was attached was sent over York River into Gloucester a part of the British Army was in Gloucester town, this was before the siege commenced, about this time Colonel John F Mercer [John Francis Mercer] called for volunteers out of Wedon's [George Weedon's] brigade, to form what was called a Regiment of Grenadiers, he joined Colonel Mercer, and was with him in the engagement he had with the British at Sowell's old field near Gloucester town [October 3, 1781], sometime before this, the time for which he had enlisted had expired, but as the siege of York was about commencing, they refused to discharge us, or we agreed to serve longer, he does not remember which but such was, they served until Cornwallis surrendered [October 19, 1781] at which time or soon after, they were discharged and to the best of his recollection and belief, he served a month and a half or two months longer than he enlisted for – The foregoing is a true account of his services to his country in the war of the Revolution as well as he can now remember. 1st Questions by the Court: Where and in what year were you born. Answer, I was born in the year 1763 on the 29th of March in the County of Hanover and State of Virginia. 2nd Question. Have you any record of your age, and if so where is it. Answer – I have no record of my age. I have often seen the register which my father kept, but it was carried by my sister who was older than myself to the Western Country. 3rd Question. Where were you living, when called into the service, where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live. Answer. I was living in the County of Louisa in the State of Virginia when I entered the service, since the Revolutionary War, I have lived in Louisa and the County of Orange, I have lived in Orange for about 25 years. 4th Question. How were you called into service, were you drafted, did you volunteer or were you a substitute, and if a substitute for whom. Answer. I volunteered as is stated in the body of my declaration. 5th Question. State the names of some of the regular Officers, who were with the troops, where you served, such Continental and militia regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your services. Answer. I have already stated in the body of my declaration the general circumstances of my services, and also the names of my immediate Officers, And also of some of the regular officers with whom I served. I further recollect General Weedon, Colonel Mercer, Colonel Batop [probably James Baytop] at the siege of York on the Gloucester side of the River, also Count Sweem [?] commander of the French cavalry, also Major Cary. I think and many other inferior officers, and among them Major Campbell. 6th Question. Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so, by whom was it given, and what has become of it. Answer. I never received a discharge but at the close of the siege of York I was left to discharge the Regiment myself, acting at the time as Ensign and adjutant by brevet, though I never had a commission. 7th Question did you ever receive a commission, and if so by whom was it signed, and what has become of it. Answer. I never did receive a commission though I was for a long time a noncommissioned officer acting sometimes as Quarter master, Quarter master Sergeant, Sergeant and Sergeant Major, and then Ensign as above stated. 7th question. State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood, who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief of your services as a soldier of the Revolution. Answer. Mr. Reynolds Chapman the clerk of this court & Mr. James Sheppard of this County and I can name many more if necessary.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any State.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

Signed

S/ George Morris²

² this is not the actual signature of the veteran as the above is a copy of his declaration

[Reynolds Chapman and James Shephard gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[pp 29-32 handwritten letter from the veteran to the Commissioner of Pensions which I believe to be in the handwriting of the veteran.]

Orange June 19th 1835

To J. L. Edwards Esquire Commissioner of pensions

Sir

I have just read a communication from you to Reynolds Chapman Esquire relative to my claims for a pension as a Soldier of the Revolution and I should not make any further move in that business if I did not believe that I discover that there were some doubts entertained in your department with regard to the correctness of the statement made in my declaration. I therefore hasten to make this reply.

There must Sir have been some mistake in my statement of facts or in your understanding of those Statements. You state that my name does not appear on the rolls of the Continental line nor on the rolls of the State Garrison Regiment. If in my declaration I stated that I served in the Continental Army it was done through mistake for I never meant to say that I served in that line neither did I mean to say that I enlisted in the State Garrison Regiment I ought to have stated and believe that I did so state (at least in substance) that I first enlisted in a company of guards raised to guard the British prisoners called Burgoyne's men. I entered that service before I was sixteen years old how long I agreed to serve I do not remember but it was for some months how many I can't venture to say it was in this service that I acted in the quartermaster department but for how long I can't say, after I returned to my father's I was placed on the list in a militia company the militia were then enrolled at 16 years of age & I think that in a short time there came orders for a draft to raise men for 18 months to March to the South to join General Green [Nathanael Greene] after Gates defeat [August 15 – 16, 1780] and about the same time the State of Virginia was invaded by a British Army commanded by General Lesley there was a great press to raise men both to go to the South and also to serve in Virginia. The militia had their choice either to list as volunteers to serve in their own State for 18 months or to stand a draft for 18 months and to March to the South. I enlisted as a State volunteer we rendezvoused at Richmond and there joined the State Garrison Regiment then commanded by Major McGill that Regiment was but the skeleton of a Regiment when we were attached to it I believe that there was not more than 50 men present when we joined this I well remember that there was but two Captains Companies, Vaughn's and Allen's and they were very few in number I do not remember that before we marched for Portsmouth when the Enemy lay that they were several Companies of militia attached to the Regiment when we got in the neighborhood of the British we joined General Muhlenberg & remained until the Enemy re-embarked and left the bay in the commence of the winter we were marched up to Petersburg there was snow on the ground we were badly closed and shod & on the march I and a great many more were taken sick a great many of whom died I was carried up to Petersburg & there lay sick I believe through the balance of the winter and now Served, I come to answer to your demand how long I was on furlough I can only say that to the best of my recollection my friends hearing of my illness my bro. [brother] applied and obtained leave of absence I was somewhat on the recovery at that time for I remember well that I was carried on horseback up to my father's & I think it was in the month of March and I also remember that I joined the Army at the Morbin hills between the first & the middle of April for this I know that when I joined after the Expiration of my furlough the Marquis Lafayette had not joined the Virginia Army and I think that you may ascertain that he took command in the month

of April this is all that I can venture to say with regard to the length of my leave of absence you require me to say what was the cause of my not applying for a pension sooner I answer that I was endeavoring to obtain evidence that I served in the war of the Revolution I am an old man 72 years old if I live to see the 29th of next March and therefore not able to travel like a young man there is no one of the state volunteer that listed at or about the Time that I did left that is not in this part of the world those brave soldiers are gone on and Expedition from which they will never returned I happened to hear of Smith although he lived a distance from me and although he did not belong to my Regiment yet we were stationed in the same Fort at the Siege and with great difficulty I obtained the certificate that I sent to you department.³ I now come to the last of your requirement which is for me to prove by two witnesses how long I served now Sir permit me to ask you whether you can bring yourself to believe that after the lapse of more than half a century that such a thing is possible I can't tell how long any of the Soldiers that I served with were in service I know that I was in the service at the Albemarle barracks for several months but can't say how many I know that I listed as a State volunteer for 18 months and I know that I served longer than that time can't say how much longer how then should I prove by others how long I served. The only thing that it is possible for me to do is to state the different Field officers under whom I served & then I should suppose that there is [in] your department voucher or records that would be better evidence than any that I could get of events that occurred between 50 & 60 years ago, when I joined the State Garrison Regiment it was commanded by Major McGill when I returned from furlough the Regiment that I found the State Troop in that I served with commanded by Colonel Charles Dabney & Major William Campbell McGill and the old soldiers of that we joined at Richmond were gone I believe were to joined the southern Army but I don't know it to be a fact. It was but a short time after I joined Colonel Dabney before the Marquis retreated to the North to join General Wayne I was then placed in rear guard under Major Armistead as well as I remember I continued under Major Armistead for a considerable time not only on the retreat but after the Marquis joined Wayne and addained [?] we were then kept in the advance – I believe that I was not returned back to Dabney's Regiment long before Washington came from the North & took command the Army was then divided Weedon's brigade including the Regiment I served in with a body of French crossed the York River Colonel Dabney did not go with us but the Regiment was placed under the command of Colonel Batup about this Time Colonel John F Mercer read Washington's order to us authorizing him to rise out of Weedon's brigade a Regiment of Grenadiers I and a number of others served out & he fored [?] out the Balance to make up his number this was before the Siege commenced I was then with Mercer on the lines until the Siege commenced when we returned back to our former Regiment I was Sergeant Major before I joined Mercer when I returned to Batup's Regiment there was a vacancy of an Ensign, Batup appointed me by brevet to fill the vacancy & also to act as adjutant in a short time after the British Army surrendered I was order[ed] as adjutant to March the volunteers (that is what was left of them & I think that was very few) to the magazine for them to deliver their arms this was all the discharge that we got and in fact I never saw a written discharge given to a soldier while I was in the war. I must not be understood here to say that all Batup's Regiment was discharged none but the Virginia volunteers which was but a small part of that Regiment I thus have been particular in detailing these events to enable the department by comparing my statements with documents that I presume is in its possession.

S/ George Morris

³ The file does not contain evidence given by Smith or Shepherd.

George Morris

I have rote [written] is in bad health and with a Trembling hand

[p 40]

Orange County of Virginia December 2nd 1836

Mr. J. L. Edwards

Sir: I must beg leave again to call your attention to my claim as a Soldier of the Revolution it is said that a man is a bad judge in his own cause but it does appear to me that mine is a hard a very hard case for nearly two years in the Early part of my life high served my country for I entered the service before I was sixteen years old as stated in my declaration and although I cannot remember with any certainty how long I served in that Tower [tour] yet I do know that I after being discharged from the service enlisted for 18 months and I do know that I served out that time and for which I never had one cent I might have got a certificate for the wages of a Common Soldier but at that time I and others thought that I was entitled to the pay of an Ensign as I had acted in that place of an absent officer for some time before the few of the volunteers that were left living were discharged. This I believe was the cause why I got no certificate of wages as a soldier; my Country was then poor and not able to pay, close or feed the soldiers as they ought to have been but the government is now rich and is justly indebted to me for the amount due to me for the time I served with interest from that time. This let me have that and then I'll never beg for a pension – I beg Sir that you will give yourself the trouble to examine my claim as stated in my declaration together with the proof of my service. I can hear of other old soldiers that have obtained pensions whose claims are not better if as well supported as mine. Why is this [?] That me know if you please

S/ George Morris

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Sir Yours of May 6 1837 duly received in which you state that you require further proof before you will allow me any pay for my revolutionary services which I presume you want me to understand as a [several indecipherable words] of my claim for if I could do that, that no other applicant has been required to do yet you could very Easily say that you required more proof I have already been at very considerable Expense & [indecipherable word or words] to get the proof sent on for I could not go myself, but had to him & send and the witnesses lived at a great distance & if I could hear of one of those brave volunteers that survived the dangers of the Service but there were then but few of us that were left but if I knew of one or could hear of one still living and [indecipherable word] again to hire & send if it were up thousand miles it would answer no purpose you would say that more proof must be obtained. I sent to Sheperson⁴ & obtained his Evidence I saw that he had made a mistake & if I could have been with him I could have convinced him in a minute of his mistake about my being discharged at the same time that he was as for a Captain harris [sic] I do declare that I do not recollect that there was such an officer in the Army the only Time I knew Sheperson in the service was at the retreat of the Marquis through Virginia from Petersburg to the North in order to join Wayne we were both on

⁴ Sic, [David Shepherdson S6076](#) The file does not contain any testimony by Shepherdson in behalf of the veteran.

the rear guard on the retreat and when the armies formed a junction & advanced on the Enemy we were on the advance guard & about that time Sheperson was discharged & I have no doubt believed that I was discharged at the same time which you know if you believe Smith (and you have no cause to disbelieve him) that I was at the capture of Cornwallis 6 or 8 months after Sheperson was mistaken in this the rear guard in which we served together was made up of detachments from the whole Army & there might be a Captain harris among the officers for what I know but if there was I did not know him but it was a Time of great anger and fatigue & you ought to know how difficult it must be to be certain of anything that happened in such service as that after a lapse of more than half a century you say that Sheperson was a militia man in that you know more than I do [indecipherable word] thought he was a volunteer although I know that he did not belong to the Core that I did & how long he served I know not but [several words written over and illegible] any of the soldiers of the Revolution & they will tell you that the volunteers were placed on detachment & attached to different regiments & Companies as the case required but Sir there is one thing that I will bring to your notice you say Sheperson served a short Tour short or long he got the pension as he writes to me & you don't contradict him & you see cause to reject my claim how is that however it is painful for me now to write for I can now hardly hold the pen and I now know that I am laboring in vain but if I have been corrected in my statements as you have stated in one of yours to me I will reciprocate the charge you say that the men's time were not up until the last of December 1781 this is wrong the time expressed about the commencement or during the Siege of York wheeling worked discharged until after the capture of Cornwallis but our time was out before.

I will again say that I never received one cent of my Country for my Services I might have got a certificate others did but I was advised to contend for the pay of an Ensign as I had served in the place of one that was obliged in this I failed in consequence of never holding the commission it is hard that I should be obliged to pay my part of the pensions of others that did not go through a little of what I did & those two who received their pay as soldiers when they were discharged & that I should be rejected without a Cert. – Mine is an extraordinary case & why it is that you have seen cause to reject my claim appears to me strange. I believe that it is a [indecipherable word] Maxim in all well-regulated Governments that Every Man ought to be considered innocent until he is proved guilty. Now Sir let me ask you for your authority for saying as you have done in one of your letters that you doubt the truth of my statement although made in the most solemn manner. This is a very great charge and I can have no doubt but you are a gentleman where you come to reflect on it will think it's so. I shall send a special messenger to Washington for the purpose of taking a copy of all the papers that I have sent to the department which you preside [over]. I therefore hope that you will be [words written over and indecipherable]

Yours &c
S/ George Morris

[p 6: Copy of the last will and testament of George Morris of Orange County in which he named the following: son Dabney; daughter Polly Musgrove; daughter Sarah Bibb; son Richard G; daughter Susan B Hord; daughter Ann Chiles; his child who he has cut off from inheriting: Tandy Morris for bad behavior; his son-in-law Henry Chiles; Executor William Chiles; securities: Lewis Hord, Robert Collins, Richard G. Bibb and Robert S. Ellis.]

[p 12: On September 17, 1856 in Orange County Virginia Mary Morris, 49, filed for her bounty

land entitlement as the widow of George Morris.]

[p 4: On April 30, 1879 in Orange County Virginia, Mary Morris, 77 filed for a widow's pension stating that she is the widow of George Morris; that she married him March 5, 1847; that they were married by Joseph Sear, a minister of the gospel; that her name prior to her marriage was Mary Heaston [?]⁵; that her husband died in Orange County Virginia in March 1854.


Signature of Claimant.]

[Veteran's widow was pensioned at the rate of \$8 per month commencing March 9, 1878.]

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